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# British Civilian Prisoners IN German East Africa

A REPORT BY

THE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ON  
THE TREATMENT BY THE ENEMY  
OF BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR

LONDON

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## BRITISH CIVILIAN PRISONERS IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA

VERY serious reports having reached His Majesty's Government with regard to the treatment by the Authorities in German East Africa of the British Civilian Prisoners of War there, the Committee were directed to collect all available information upon the subject and report upon it for the information of the Secretary of State.

This Report is the outcome of that direction.

In one respect the task of preparing it has presented little difficulty. The information before the Committee is clear, precise, and, as they believe, quite reliable. The witnesses include planters and other British subjects who chanced to find themselves in the Colony at the outbreak of war, and the Committee have been specially assisted by the information supplied by the Clerical Missionaries of the C.M.S. and the Clerical and Lady Members of the Universities Mission to Central Africa—the U.M.C.A. These Missionaries had, many of them, been settled in German East Africa for long periods, and their stations, with others of a like kind, were perhaps the only civilising centres that had existed for the enlightenment and benefit of the native population. Their testimony accordingly has been of special value, and the Committee would draw special attention to the diary of Miss Durnford of the U.M.C.A., kindly placed by her in their hands.

They desire to express their high appreciation of the whole tone of that diary. They have been deeply impressed by the writer's readiness, despite her sufferings, to make excuse or allowance for treatment for which justification is hard to find, and they have been much struck by her grateful eagerness to recall any acts of kindness or humanity which from time to time she or her friends experienced at the hands of individual Germans with whom they came in touch.

On the outbreak of war the British Authorities in the Zanzibar Protectorate conceded to the Germans resident there the privilege of leaving the island within 24 hours. The concession extended even to those of military age, and it was fully taken advantage of. As early as the 11th of August, 1914, several young Germans in military kit, just arrived from Zanzibar, were met with on the Central Railway of German East Africa proceeding to the different military positions in the Colony which had been assigned to them.

At that time the German Authorities were apparently prepared to concede similar privileges to the British civilians in their East African Territory. The Rev. E. F. Spanton, of the U.M.C.A., whose mission station was at Msalabani, in the Tanga District of the Colony, tells how a few days after the commencement of hostilities a German Lieutenant, with four European soldiers and some native askaris, came to the station, bringing with him a document signed by the Civil Authority and countersigned by the Military Command, in which it was set forth that the Government did not propose to interfere with the Mission work. The officer went on verbally to

explain to Mr. Spanton that if the Missionaries demanded safe-conduct out of German territory the German Government would be bound to grant it, but the Governor hoped that they would remain where they were and lend their assistance in keeping the natives quiet. All that would be required of them would be their parole not to commit any hostile act and not to leave the country without special permission.

Similarly, Mr. Godfrey Herbert Pattison, the British Manager of the Maranja Coffee Estates in the Kilimanjaro District of the Colony, was informed by the Bezirksamtmann of Moshi that he might remain on his plantation, where he would not be molested.

In the case of the Missionaries of the C.M.S. any assurances they received held good until the end of May, 1915, up to which date they were permitted under supervision and regulation to live upon their stations, situated for the most part, it would seem, in the interior of the Colony.

But for the other British Civilians the promises made were not long kept.

As to Mr. Pattison, he and his wife and the British employed on his plantation were, as early as the 24th August, 1914, ordered to leave their home at once and proceed to Moshi and thence to Wilhelms-thal. At that place Kondoa Iranji was named as their destination. They reached it on September 10th, and they remained interned there until July 31st, 1915, when they were removed to Kiboriani.

Nor were the community at Msalabani much more fortunate. Very soon they found that the assurance of a safe-conduct was not going to be observed. On

four or five separate occasions safe-conduct was requested on behalf of those members of the mission normally resident at Zanzibar, who desired to return there, but on each occasion it was refused on the score of military exigencies. At the end of September, permission was at last given, but, being delayed in the post, it was subsequently declared cancelled by the Commandant of Mheza, and on September 29th, 1914, orders were received from the German General Command that all English people in the Tanga District, Missionaries included, were to proceed forthwith on an eleven days' march to Mrogoro, a hill town on the Central Railway, which, in December, 1914, became the seat of Government of the Colony. On September 30th this order was so far modified as to permit one priest and the ladies in charge of the Mission Station to remain behind. All the others, however, were directed to assemble at Mhiza on the afternoon of October 1st, ready for their journey.

Thence they started on a march that ultimately brought them to Kilimatinde, which they reached on the morning of October 13th. This particular journey and its incidents may be conveniently dwelt upon because they were typical of the numerous movements of the British civilians, male and female, directed apparently with the object of concentrating them in camps on or near the Central Railway, which runs from Dar-es-Salaam on the coast to Lake Tanganyika.

On this occasion the prisoners were told that food and all other necessities would be provided for the journey, but they had not proceeded for an hour on

their way when they were informed by the escort that he had no instructions for feeding them and that they must fend for themselves. Fortunately, they remained for the first night at one of the Mission stations and they were able there to procure some food for their ten days' march, "otherwise," as Mr. Spanton says, "our lot might have been a difficult one."

And even at this early date there was manifested by the Germans that desire to humiliate the British civilians in the eyes of the natives which was so constant a characteristic of their subsequent conduct.

Before entering Bagamoyo township on the way to Mrogoro, the caravan was halted that the porters, askaris and the rest might be formed into a close procession. The porters were directed to sing as they went, so as to attract the people, and thus it was that the streets were lined by excited crowds collected to look at the prisoners. These were drawn up on exhibition for half an hour outside the Boma, surrounded by a crowd of natives and Arabs, who were left free to amuse themselves by a competition in insult and invective. The evidence is cumulative as to the hardship and privation—in many cases quite gratuitous—to which the prisoners generally were subjected on these marches.

But an excess of cruelty was reserved for the native Mission teachers, the bulk of whom were arrested, put in chains, and compelled, while still bearing their chains, to carry heavy loads across the country. It mattered not that these teachers for the most part were German subjects, whose only possible offence was that they had been connected with an

English Mission before there was any thought of war. They were driven, many of them, to death. Mr. Spanton states that of those ultimately taken to Kondoa Iranji, nearly twenty succumbed to the treatment which they had to endure.

It will be necessary in a later part of this Report to refer to the unsuccessful attempts to obtain by means of torture from some of these poor native teachers evidence in support of quite unfounded charges against Mr. Doulton, of the C.M.S., and Mr. Keates, of the U.M.C.A. But returning now to the concentration camps, the principal places in which at one time or another the civilian prisoners were interned were Kilimatinde, Kiboriani, Buigiri and Tabora. These camps, as has been said, were located on or near the Central Railway, and their story is in great measure that of the prisoners. It will be convenient, therefore, to deal with them in their order.

KILIMATINDE, actually on the Central Railway, was, before the war, an old military post. The prisoners interned there were confined in a stone fort. They were permitted two hours' daily exercise in a space about 100 yards square, set out on the top of the hill on which the fort was built. Except for that indulgence they were not allowed to pass the gates, notwithstanding constant protest against the restriction. The camp was dirty and the sanitary arrangements quite inadequate. The Commandant was warned, but without avail, that an outbreak of typhoid must result from the insanitary conditions under which the prisoners were compelled to exist. Such an



outbreak did supervene in December, 1915. It was only after it had passed that a slight improvement was even attempted. As to the food, this at first was good, but it gradually deteriorated. By November, 1914, it consisted of meat and bones, bread made from millet and very weak coffee without milk or sugar. In the early days the prisoners were allowed to purchase small luxuries like fruit, etc., and they were permitted to order from Dar-es-Salaam or Tabora any clothes or other things of which they stood in need. After the Battle of Tanga, however, in November, 1914, these privileges were withdrawn. After that battle, says Mr. Spanton,

"the attitude of the Germans towards us changed in a marked degree. Feeling secure of their future in the Colony, they began to bully the prisoners, withdrawing one by one the privileges we had been allowed, and subjecting us to a continually increasing number of regulations."

At this camp the punishments were of a particularly arbitrary kind. Prisoners, often without knowing, and constantly without any opportunity of meeting, the charge against them, were put in cells, most frequently in one designed for natives, and infested by vermin, with a low roof of corrugated iron, and with such an absence of ventilation that the heat in the middle of the day was overpowering.

The Committee take as an example of this treatment the case of Mr. Cooper, a British planter. He was confined in his cell for several days without any kind of trial. The only charge against him was that he had complained about the food, with what reason

is not open to doubt. Representations addressed to the Commandant against the treatment of this man only evoked the reply that prisoners were not entitled to make complaints. As prisoners they had no rights, so it was said, and the Commandant added that in future any complaint lodged by any number or body of them would be treated as a revolt and dealt with as such.

Mr. Spanton gives another case of arbitrary punishment at Kilimatinde, which may be dwelt upon because he describes it as being thoroughly typical of many cases occurring in all the camps.

On December 1st, 1914, four British Naval officers, taken at Dar-es-Salaam, were brought to Kilimatinde. The event was an occasion of excitement amongst the prisoners. Someone shouted, "Are we downhearted?" when Herr Dorrendorf, the Assistant Commandant, of whom we hear later on at Kiboriani, rushed upstairs and straightway arrested the Rev. Mr. Fixsen, one of the U.M.C.A. Missionaries, now deceased, who, as it happened, had been quietly sitting playing chess.

It was explained to the Commandant that Mr. Fixsen was in no way guilty of the offence for which presumably he was under arrest, and that his innocence could be established by the direct evidence of three witnesses. The Commandant replied that, witness or no witness, he should regard Mr. Fixsen as guilty until the man who had actually shouted went to him and confessed. This the man did, but, unabashed, the Commandant said Mr. Fixsen must stay in the punishment cell for three days. And there he was kept without even water to wash himself with.

KIBORIANI, the second camp, was, before the war, a C.M.S. Sanatorium. It is situated 6,500 feet above sea level on the hills above Mpapua. In January, 1915, twelve of the prisoners at Kilimatinde were sent there to form the nucleus of a new camp, the Commandant of which was Herr Dorrendorf, already referred to, who, in pre-war days, had been a planter, and, as is stated, of evil repute in the Colony.

Before long forty prisoners were collected in the house at Kiboriani, Mission ladies amongst the number. Four of them occupied a room 9 by 7 feet, parties of six found accommodation in rooms each 15 by 9 feet. There were no separate sanitary arrangements provided for the women. For them the place was quite impossible.

But all the prisoners at Kiboriani suffered acutely. It would seem that their sufferings were attributable to three main causes—excessive cold, insufficient nourishment and the callous cruelty of the Commandant. As to the cold, it appears that during the rainy season of 1915, when the camp had its beginning, there was hardly a day without rain and the cold was intense. Fires were only allowed for the prisoners by the order and according to the mood of the Commandant. Their meals were taken in an open shed, constantly wet with the thick mists and heavy rains that prevailed. The first prisoners were the greatest sufferers from the cold. Their camp beds were taken from them on their arrival, and the native beds they were promised did not arrive, in some cases for six weeks, during the whole of which time, in the midst of the cold season, the prisoners had to lie on the cement floor without even a

mattress. And the food was very bad. The prisoners are said to have had a sufficiency of very tough meat, but their staple diet was "uwele," an inferior kind of millet grown by the natives for beer and only used by them for food when mixed with other grain. Except in times of famine they do not eat it alone, owing to its injurious effect on the stomach. In time of plenty, however, it was considered good enough for Europeans. For many weeks the prisoners were forced to eat this grain, and that although fresh mealies were readily obtainable within two hours' walk of the camp. On only two occasions between January and May, 1915, were green vegetables allowed, and when representations were made that the health of the prisoners was suffering and a request put forward that they might be permitted, at least occasionally, peas or beans, which are the abundant food of the country people of a district rich in produce, the only reply of the Chief of the Staff was that no alteration was to be made, and that any further complaint was to be punished. Their money was taken from them, and the prisoners were not allowed to buy anything, not even native tobacco. In these circumstances it was only a moderate concession that in May they were allowed a plentiful supply of fresh milk.

In a word, the physical condition of the prisoners at Kiboriani was, as described by one of them on his arrival, a condition of extreme misery. And there can be no doubt that this misery was enormously increased by the studied, and probably congenital, brutality of Herr Dorrendorf, the German Commandant. His reputation before the war for gross

cruelty to natives is said to have been notorious. He certainly lived up to any such reputation in his dealings with the prisoners of both sexes under his charge.

At one time there were as many as thirty-three ladies at Kiboriani, and it is impossible to find for his treatment of them any palliation or excuse. To some he was grossly insolent; frequently drunk, he was, when drunk, extremely noisy, and one occasion is recalled upon which, when in that condition, he broke into a room in which six ladies were asleep.

On another occasion Miss Davey, one of the U.M.C.A. Sisters, was asked to go from Kiboriani to nurse at Kilimatinde. She had to make the journey on this mission of mercy by way of Gulwe, a station on the railway, twenty miles off. It was raining in torrents, and Miss Davey asked for a native chair, the customary means of conveyance. Dorrendorf abused her violently and refused. She retired to her room. Dorrendorf retorted by sending two askaris after her to drag her out by force. Even these native troops hesitated to use personal violence against so weak a victim and they persuaded her to come outside, and there the other British in the camp advised her to yield. Dorrendorf thereupon abused her again, saying that if she refused to walk down the path at once, he would fetch a rope and have her dragged down by the askaris.

On still another occasion Miss Horne, who had been a nurse, was ordered in December, 1915, to leave Kiboriani to attend to the typhoid cases at Kilimatinde. She, too, was compelled to walk the twenty miles.

In the light of such conduct a further incident affecting Herr Dorrendorf need excite no surprise. It is related of him that having to accompany one of the Missionaries recovering from fever from Kiboriani to the hospital at Mrogoro, he, in rude health, set out with ample food for himself, but with none for his patient, who, weak and ill, was left without any from 4 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The askaris at Kiboriani were permitted to order the white prisoners about and push them at their pleasure during their hours of exercise. No protest against even European ladies being so treated was of any avail. All show of outward respect was reserved for the Commandant himself and his German guards. On the duty of saluting him and them on all and every occasion Dorrendorf was specially insistent. On March 8th, 1915, the whole camp was paraded to hear themselves railed at and called swine for neglect of this duty, for which, as for all other offences, the punishments were arbitrary and excessive.

The usual punishment was confinement in the punishment cell for varying terms of imprisonment. Detention in the place set apart for this purpose was cruelty in itself, especially during the cold season. It was a small grass hut erected on a specially exposed spot above the camp. Although designed for a punishment cell, it was, when not so required, used as a stable, and it always contained skins and rotting horns. So cold was the weather during the rainy season that even in the stone buildings of the camp itself fires at night, with three blankets at the least for each prisoner, were absolutely essential. In

the punishment cell, however, open and exposed though it was, there was no place for a fire: nothing more than a plank bed and one blanket, with so-called bread and water for food.

Different instances of arbitrary imprisonment in this cell are given in the evidence. It will suffice to detail the experiences of Mr. H. M. Ross as recounted both by himself and several of the other witnesses.

On March 9th, 1915, Mr. Ross was sent to this cell by Dorrendorf for three days on a charge of turning his back upon an under-officer. The weather was terribly cold: it rained every morning, and there was a mist shrouding the whole country. The cell was like a sieve. Ross was put on bread and water, and given only one blanket. The other prisoners protested. They told Dorrendorf such treatment would kill Ross. "Very good," said he. After three days Dorrendorf asked Ross how he liked it. He shrugged his shoulders, and was thereupon promptly sent to the cell for two more days. On being released he collapsed. He was for some time confined to bed, suffering from the effects of his imprisonment, and afterwards he became a martyr to dysentery, attributable to the treatment he received.

But the most outrageous proceedings on the part of Dorrendorf took place at Kikombo in the course of the transfer of prisoners from Buigiri to Tabora on April 21st, 1916. Although the incident has no direct reference to Kiboriani, it may be conveniently related here. Nearly every witness deals with it, so great an impression did it produce upon them all.

Further details will be found in other accounts, but the Committee feel that they cannot do better than set it forth in Miss Durnford's own words, taken from her diary:

"It was a very sudden move, and an exciting one. On Easter Saturday afternoon, at about 4.30, on coming out from Evensong, we were given the order: In thirty minutes we were all to be in readiness to leave Buigiri Camp for the station (Kikombo), but our destination was not given; a rumour soon got afloat—Tabora! No one can possibly imagine the stampede it was, one box allowed, and our rugs, etc., for the night. Of course no one had anything ready, and soon the whole camp was in a state of hustle-bustle, and you saw people running in every direction, trying to collect up a few necessaries, etc., and in thirty-five minutes we were all drawn up in line, ready. Porters started with the loads, and we followed behind in the charge of Dorrendorf and Gerth and some ten or twelve soldiers. Mrs. Wickham and Mrs. Doulton were provided with machels, and were carried to Kikombo, but the rest of us had to tramp it. What a walk it was! We were carrying bags, hats, umbrellas, etc. As it was a Vigil, some of us had scarcely eaten anything all day, and the day before was Good Friday, so that we were not exactly in walking trim. There was no time for food, or even to pack anything much. At 3 p.m. we had partaken of a cup of coffee and a little uwele bread bassi.

"The journey took us rather longer than usual. We were pretty tired, and on arrival we were shown into an iron shed, in which were nothing but sacks of mouldy corn, which smelt very horrid



and were full of weevils. All turned into it, together with forty-two native prisoners and fifty English and Italians, men and women, two babies and two dogs, and the doors were locked upon us. Two drunken soldiers (natives) were also locked inside with us, one on each side of the door. Nothing in the way of food was given us; two pails of water were brought in by request, and we had to beg for water for the native prisoners. In this place we were kept until 4.30 the next afternoon.

"There was much to annoy us during these hours, and none who were there will ever forget the indignities to which we were put. The conversation of the soldiers during the night at times was almost unbearable, disgusting beyond everything. Annie and I were sitting on our boxes close to the door, so came in for it all. Sacks were given for people to sit or lie upon, but they were so full of weevils and smelt so disgustingly that most people discarded them. It was not cold—we were too tightly packed. The air became most trying long before the dawn. Ninety-six of us in that close place was something never to be forgotten. Permission to go outside was forbidden us.

"The two Germans in charge, Herr Dorrendorf and Gerth, were both rude and insulting. Some time after we had got settled down, and to keep ourselves from getting depressed, and to forget how uncomfortable everything was, we began singing songs (patriotic songs), Rule B., etc. Then the soldiers outside—there were some twelve or more of them under one of the windows of the shed, drinking pombe and making a great uproar. Mr. Pattison (foolishly, I grant) called out to them to make less noise. Then an answer came back

for us to be quiet. The men, thinking it was the soldiers speaking, shouted again. Suddenly the door opened, and in came Gerth and Dorrendorf, and they were almost mad with temper. Dorrendorf shouted at us, and used most insulting language. Then he turned to the two soldiers, and gave an order to them that if anyone spoke a single word again during the night they were to be shot at once. Of course he was drunk, or he would never have given such an order. They both simply roared at us. We really were rather alarmed for some of the men. The soldier replied 'Yes, he would do so,' and one wondered if he would have dared; but they were also drunk, and probably would have felt afraid. We certainly were in a hot corner. Quietness fell upon us, and only a whispering went on for some time, excepting for the soldiers, who talked in low voices and used most vile language. Annie and I said 'Compline' together, some of the others did likewise, and then we waited. Sleep was out of the question; there were no beds, no place even to rest one's back against. Some tried the bags, but the 'creatures' were so unpleasant they soon gave them up.

"How we longed for the dawn! It was an awful night's experience. The soldiers refused to let anyone go outside, even for necessities, and at last we sent to our guards, and asked for permission. It was granted, but in parties of four or five, with an askari with us, and even one of the Germans came to the place and waited outside for some of us women. This was an insult not to be forgotten or excused.

"The natives were kept inside until about 9 a.m., when they were marched in relays and brought back again and sent to their end of the

shed. We were starvingly hungry, and as there were no preparations of food being got for us, we finally sent a note to Dorrendorf asking for a meal. He gave permission for coffee to be got, and rice and meat to be cooked for us. This we got about 8.30 a.m. A second supply was cooked and brought in to us at 1.30, and then we were told that the train would be in at 3 p.m.; so after trying to get a little sleep (everyone was dead tired), and the heat of the shed was simply unbearable, we got Dorrendorf's permission at midday to have the doors opened, otherwise I think we should have been ill; it was like a furnace after the sun got well up.

"At three o'clock someone made a cup of tea, which was very nice. We then tied up our rugs, and as soon as the train arrived we were hustled into empty trucks. We had to sit on our boxes, as there were no seats. It was a long and tiring journey, and we got a certain amount of sleep, as we could not keep awake. We were allowed out of the carriage once during the night, at some station; a soldier took us. We reached Tabora at six o'clock on Monday morning."

BUIGIRI, the third of the more important camps in which civilian prisoners were concentrated, was a station of the C.M.S. some little distance from Kikombo, just mentioned. In May, 1915, the Missionaries there were removed to Kiboriani for internment. Thereafter their station was converted into a prison camp. In February, 1916, Miss Durnford and other prisoners at Kiboriani were taken back to Buigiri in charge of Dorrendorf. They remained there until Easter, when, as above mentioned, they were taken to Tabora by way of Kikombo.

Except for a month, when Herr Schenck, who is spoken of in very high terms, took his place, Dorrendorf was in charge at Buigiri. The punishments there inflicted by him were of the same extreme kind. One instance may be given: Mr. Wickham, a British planter, 6 feet 1 inch in height, was given three days' cells for some trivial offence. His cell was a fowl house 5 feet 6 inches high and 8 feet square. The fowls were turned out, and he was turned into it, just as it was, uncleaned. Comment seems superfluous.

TABORA, the largest camp of all, was specially built for the accommodation of prisoners. Originally intended exclusively for service prisoners, N.C.O.s and men, in course of time it became the camp of many civilians. As many as 136 prisoners were confined there at once.

The camp was about 100 yards square, on sandy ground, enclosed by a barbed-wire fence. The prisoners were kept in two corrugated-iron sheds 14 feet in breadth, placed at right-angles along the west and south sides of the square. The open space in the centre was much broken up by buildings used as kitchen, store-rooms, carpenter's shop, blacksmith's forge, etc. Attached to the camp was a prison built by the Germans since the outbreak of war.

The food at Tabora was bad, at times positively revolting. Mr. Scott Brown, confined there from April, 1915, to September, 1916, says that for about a year the prisoners' diet consisted of badly husked native rice of very inferior quality improperly cooked,

and, more often than not, burnt. With the rice was served meat, apparently the refuse from the native meat market. Three slices of millet bread formed the daily allowance of each prisoner, an allowance slightly increased in 1916. As a food variation, chiroko (a tree bean) was occasionally served, but few prisoners ever did or could eat it, and the sour condition of the mealy pap, sometimes supplied by way of change, generally rendered it uneatable.

At first practically no provision was made for the sick, although there were always many malarial patients. Mr. Scott Brown estimates that as many as 30 per cent. of the entire camp were always down with malarial or blackwater fevers, but it was only for the few that even quinine was available. In the latter time none at all could be had; the medicines which the Germans had secured by the courtesy of the British Red Cross being reserved by them, for the most part, for their own invalids. Ultimately, at the instance of the U.M.C.A. prisoners, two Mission Nurses were brought from Kiboriani, and to Nurse Wallace and Nurse Gunn, who came, the highest praise is given for their work amongst the sick. Diarrhoea in an extreme form was exceptionally prevalent, and there are instances on record of collapse from this cause of prisoners who, notwithstanding their weakness due to it, were compelled to do their part in the unremitting and degrading work which constituted the pre-eminent claim of this camp to unenviable distinction.

Witness after witness deals in scathing terms with this abuse. Civilians as well as service prisoners had to work every day from 7.30 to 11 and from 2.30

to 5. The work was hard, and, in the climate and without sun-helmets, these hours were excessive. Apart from that the work was, the Committee feel sure, made degrading by design, and was invariably carried out under native supervision. It included such things as drawing water from a well at which native women were working, and carrying it 400 yards to the camp, carrying water, sand, etc., for native masons engaged in building operations, and acting as their labourers, dragging a lorry containing empty drums from the camp to a well near a native encampment, the men being insufficiently clothed and without socks or boots; other prisoners were sent out with a hoe to prepare the ground for cultivating the gardens of Germans not connected with the camp supply.

Mr. Scott Brown says that it was the work of a certain number of men to clear the W.C. buckets of the native guard. These buckets had to be carried out of the camp and emptied in a pit some little distance off. At times the men were employed in the useless work of emptying these pits, standing up to their knees in the excrement. On several occasions prisoners were sent out of the camp under native guard to collect cow dung, which they had to place in sacks with their naked hands. Peculiarly degrading tasks were reserved for the service men, which may be stated in this connection. Four of them were set to clear out a pit into which all the offal of the camp had been thrown. The stench arising from this was such that these men were all confined to their beds on one and the same day. Again, on numerous occasions service men were sent under

native guards to carry ox hides from the camp to a kraal some considerable distance away. They then had to scrape and bury the skins in manure. After an interval it was their task to dig them up, scrape them again, and in a stinking condition carry them back on poles to the camp through the askari barracks and the Indian encampment.

Referring to what one would regard as the least degrading of the tasks which the Committee have mentioned, that of dragging the lorry through the town, Archdeacon Woodward, speaking with 41 years' experience of East Africa, including 25 years in German East Africa, says that for a white man to be forced to perform such work is most degrading in the eyes of the natives; and in regard to the task of working with the hoe, the Committee are informed that it is not customary for white men to work with the hoe in tropical Africa, and as a result of their being required to do so at Tabora, it is recorded that it became current talk amongst the natives in the Kilimanjaro district, some hundreds of miles away, that the English had become slaves to the Germans, and were carrying buckets and stones on their heads. At Tabora itself the British prisoners came to be generally spoken of by the natives as slaves, the Swahili word "malika," which they applied to them, being stated to be, from an African point of view, a peculiarly offensive term, never used by one African with reference to another unless he wishes violently to insult him.

The Committee, on a survey of the whole evidence, find themselves in complete agreement with the witnesses, who are satisfied that this was the

result at which the Germans aimed—the destruction of British prestige in native eyes.

Now that the Committee have dealt in some detail with the economy of the principal civilian internment camp and the experiences of the prisoners there, they deem it convenient to refer in this place to one or two matters of general importance not applicable to any particular camp, but made prominent in the evidence before them.

And first they would mention the inordinate punishments inflicted for attempts to escape, whether of service men or civilians. It might perhaps have been anticipated that, in a country where the opportunity for successful escape is so rare and its chance so remote, the punishment reserved for an offence which even the German Command has elsewhere agreed to regard as meritorious in a prisoner of war would have been, to say the least, moderate. It was, however, quite inhuman. Three instances, from those given by the witnesses, will suffice to show this.

In February, 1915, Major Howard, D.S.O., escaped from Kilimatinde. A body of native askaris was at once despatched to scour the country, and bring the escaped man back dead or alive. A reward of 5,000 rs. was also promised to any village headman who succeeded in capturing him. On March 7th he was caught, and on the following day he was brought back to the camp by askaris, with a broken rib, a pierced kidney and a black eye. He was at once cast into a punishment cell 6 feet by 3 feet. A few days later the semblance of a trial took place before a native judge, but the sentence passed was never made known. Presumably, however, in



pursuance of it, Major Howard was kept in his punishment cell for five months, during which time he was only allowed to leave it once a week, and then only for half an hour's exercise. His sufferings were intense. After five months he was allowed the freedom of the camp each day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., but a year later he was still being required every night to return to his cell.

The two further instances, both of them of attempted escape from Tabora, are illustrative of much. The first was in November, 1915, the second in February, 1916, and each attempt was made by a body of four prisoners. The first party, after three or four weeks' wanderings, were forced by thirst to enter a village in the north of the Colony in search of water. As a result they were captured by the villagers. Thereupon a German with a native escort went from Tabora to bring the prisoners back. They arrived in a most distressed condition, the native guards driving them forward and beating them on the backs with their rifles. A long term of confinement in cells on bread and water followed. Of the second party of four, three got clear away to the bush, but the fourth was stopped by a native sentry just outside the camp. Five days later the other three were recaptured. They were led back to the camp roped tightly together, and literally kicked along the road by the German guard. On reaching the camp they were all cast into one cell, and left there for 24 hours, tied together, and in total darkness. Then, after being duly told by the guard that their graves had been dug, they were given for food the bread they had taken with them on their escape.

Later they were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment on various accounts, such as damaging Government property and being absent without leave, expedients by which, in so many cases, the moderate penalty for escape fixed by the German code has been increased to any desired extent. The unfortunate prisoner who failed altogether to get away had an extra punishment awarded him, apparently for his failure. For him a small corrugated iron cell was specially erected in the centre of the camp. It was exposed to the full heat of the sun, and so constructed that both ventilation and light were non-existent. After three weeks' confinement there, the prisoner's condition was such that his life was despaired of. He was then removed to one of the ordinary prison cells, where he remained until May, 1916.

Another matter to which several of the witnesses refer is the exceptionally inhuman treatment meted out to the Indian prisoners. The death rate amongst these prisoners was quite abnormal. The excessive mortality was undoubtedly due to their treatment, to the lack of proper food, and to the absence of any medical attention. Mr. Scott Brown believes that out of 400 Indian soldiers captured in the neighbourhood of Jesini and brought into the heart of the Colony there were less than 100 alive when the Belgian Army entered Tabora in September, 1916.

The Rev. Mr. Williams, who in January, 1915, was one of a party sent from the Mission Station at Wilhelmsthal to Kiboriani, relates from his diary how on January 24th, 1915, he met at Handeni several hundred Indian prisoners, many of them

wounded. On that day he himself saw these prisoners, wounded and unwounded, some of them hardly able to walk, forced into the bush to cut huge logs of firewood. They were guarded by native soldiers, who carried rifles with fixed bayonets in one hand, and a kiboko in the other, and whenever the prisoner halted for a moment he was struck on the head or back with a rifle or kiboko, whichever was most handy. Mr. Williams, also on the same day, saw a squad of wounded Indians under escort to the hospital meeting with the same treatment on the way. The sight, he says, made his blood boil.

The Committee cannot escape the conclusion that the inhuman treatment of the Indian soldiers was little more than a natural sequel to the cruelty which throughout was the portion of the native population at the hands of their German masters. The evidence is full of this. For the slightest breach of discipline the native askaris were given 25 lashes with the kiboko, a thick, long whip of hippopotamus hide. Two punishments of 25 lashes each within 14 days was the not unusual lot of a German native servant.

Mr. Scott Brown tells how at Kilimatinde the boys were laid out in the central yard of the camp, each limb held down by an askari, a fifth holding down the victim's head, while a sergeant applied the lashes. Blood, he says, was invariably drawn by the severity of the punishment, and in the case of the askaris pack-drills of four and five hours, with haversacks sand-loaded, followed.

It was nothing to Herr Dorrendorf that the flogging at this camp took place just outside the ladies' rooms. "We can see and hear all that goes on," says

Miss Durnford in her diary, "horrid, dreadful; how we shrink from such sights. Sometimes it is a soldier, or the cook, or one of their own boys, or prisoners. One cook boy ran away; a soldier was sent to find him. Neither has been seen. So the soldier took himself off as well. Wise man."

In this connection the Committee would recur to the two occasions already referred to, on which the Germans endeavoured by torture to obtain from the native Mission teachers evidence in support of unfounded, and ultimately abandoned, charges of signalling against Mr. Doulton and Mr. Keates. One of them received 110 stripes for his refusal to make false statements against a man he had learned to respect, and many other natives were severely punished as well as threatened with death if they did not "confess." This incident, perhaps more pointedly than any other, illustrates what is indeed implicit throughout the whole of this dismal record: that the German authorities seemed purposely to revel in the task—first, of taking these civilians prisoners when no military purpose was or could be thereby served, and next, of brutally entreating them when taken.

The Authorities having already been supplied with the full evidence on which this report is based, the Committee think it unnecessary further to elaborate its effect. As already indicated, they can find nowhere any justification or excuse for the outrageous treatment which it discloses.

Designed, as the Committee are forced to conclude, for the humiliation of the British in the eyes of the natives—a crime which the German

Authorities, when it suits them, have never failed to denounce in suitable language—the treatment of these civilians spared neither sex nor vocation. The fact that the great bulk of them were ladies and clergymen unselfishly devoting their lives to the work of civilisation among the native population brought them no alleviation of personal humiliation or of physical suffering.

The prisoners were made to starve in the midst of plenty; the Germans in their dealings with them allowed no place for even the most elementary principles of justice or humanity; they consistently acted on the view to which once and again they did not hesitate to give expression—that prisoners had no rights.

The Committee would have been ready charitably to conclude, if any analysis of the evidence could have justified them in so doing, that much of the treatment complained of necessarily resulted from the rude manners and primitive resources of a dark continent, and that the great sufferings of these prisoners were attributable to the misfortune that Herr Dorrendorf was entirely unfitted for the position of power in which he was placed, and that the responsibility of the Higher Command for what subsequently took place at the camp which he controlled ended with his appointment. But this conclusion is not permissible. The enlightened provision for the Germans in the Zanzibar Protectorate, and the humane regulations of General Botha in German South-West Africa after his victorious campaign there, show that the proper treatment of prisoners is no more difficult in Africa than anywhere else. And

that Herr Dorrendorf was only the ruthless exponent of a deliberate and gratuitously barbarous policy is shown by what took place at Tabora, where he was not in command, and by the further fact that many of the most grievous wrongs done to the prisoners in his camps were inflicted by direct orders from Mrogoro. That the treatment the British in fact received was that which was intended for them could perhaps not be better shown than by instructions sent from Headquarters to Kiboriani with reference to a German lady whose husband had gone off to join the British, and who was therefore suspected and detained. The telegram was shown to Miss Durnford, and it was as follows:

“Frau M. is a prisoner, but she must be treated with every consideration; not like the British prisoners.”

Indeed, the whole story, whether of the treatment of the British, the Indians or the natives, is one of undisguised brutality. It was the treatment of bullies, and, as might have been expected, the cruelty of it increased after the Battle of Tanga, in which the British were unsuccessful. It disappeared at Tabora so soon as the Belgian advance upon the place became imminent.

It was obvious that the natives longed for the success of the Allied Armies; many even of the German population did not conceal their desire for the same consummation, in order that they might enjoy the same enlightened administration which General Botha had inaugurated in German South-West Africa after his triumph there. It may be

hoped that their desire will soon be gratified. The success of General Smuts and the process of attrition slowly but surely continuing in German East Africa since his departure justify the expectation that deliverance for the service men and the few civilians still in captivity, as well as for the sorely tried native population, is now at hand.

*October 17th, 1917.*

